The Honorable Shana Dale
NASA Deputy Administrator
Remarks before the
Colorado Space Coalition Biannual Congressional and Industry Roundtable
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Thank you, Lieutenant Governor O'Brien, for your leadership and commitment to the future in signing this proclamation. I'd also like to thank the Members of Colorado's U.S. Congressional delegation for their support of NASA. A few of those members have joined us today, and NASA is most grateful – Senator Ken Salazar and Congressman Mark Udall. Finally, I'd like to thank you and the members and friends of the Colorado Space Coalition for your commitment and your efforts to help the U.S. meet our space exploration goals.

As I speak, the crew of the Space Shuttle Atlantis is concluding a mission that brings us closer to completing the International Space Station. We also will carry out a final servicing mission to the Hubble Space Telescope, and then retire the Space Shuttle fleet. After the Shuttles are retired, there will be a pronounced gap before the rise of NASA's new exploration vehicles, collectively referred to as Constellation. If we hold the line on funding, then that gap in America's spaceflight capability will be limited to about four and one-half years, from 2010 to 2015. Then we'll again be reaching upward and outward.

For at NASA, we have the charge and challenge of stepping beyond low Earth orbit and opening a way of exploration to the Moon, Mars and beyond. Step by step and launch by launch, we'll bring worlds of possibility within reach. Unlike an earlier era, we're going to the Moon to stay. With help from our international partners, we'll construct an outpost on the Moon. The outpost will be a toehold to further exploration, a unique scientific laboratory to address fundamental questions about the universe and possibly even an industrial base with which to enrich the Earth.

Then we'll go to Mars. We'll learn, we'll grow, and we'll gather our strength for the next step. The potential and the opportunities are endless. It's the most amazing and perhaps the most audacious adventure ever attempted. That's the future I hope to see. That's the future we can build together, as we are all the heirs to the spirit of discovery. Just think, some of

you or your children or grandchildren could be traveling to the Moon, Mars and other parts of the Solar System.

Regardless of who flies to the Moon and beyond, space exploration would not move forward without Colorado. Colorado has the Nation's third-largest space economy in terms of employment. More than 164,000 Coloradans have space-industry related jobs. This past fiscal year, NASA awarded nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars in contracts and grants to Colorado. Small entrepreneurs call this state home, and so do major space contractors. Colorado's university programs produce scientists, engineers, and astronauts. As I'm sure you know, one University of Colorado graduate is currently in orbit. Dr. Steve Swanson is the 18th graduate of the University of Colorado to fly into space. Reaching outward – establishing an outpost on the Moon, and going beyond is one of the hardest things humans can do. Like our ancestors, we all know the returns are real and the rewards will be profound. States like Colorado that are animated by the spirit of the frontier, and states with an innovative, creative workforce on which to draw, are likely to receive the most benefits.

NASA is already calling on those skilled individuals to build Constellation. As they open new worlds, they'll create new opportunities at home, both through federal investment and through private entrepreneurship. The work we engage in at NASA is truly exciting. Endeavors such as the Hubble Space Telescope, the Mars Rovers, and Constellation – which will take humans into the Solar System – inspire students to get involved with science, engineering and math. NASA's obligation is to be on the leading edge of technological innovation and we will always need a workforce with those technical skills to run the exploration program. America will need that high tech workforce if it is to stay competitive in the future. NASA drives innovation and discovery with the people we employ.

You're already surrounded by the practical goods developed by NASA engineers and scientists. On your next trip through the Denver airport, take a look at the roof. The durable fabric it is composed of was first created for Apollo spacesuits. And if you're not going to be traveling for a while, take a look around your home, since NASA has contributed to the development of everything from cordless tools to home security systems to water purifiers. Speaking of water, NASA Earth-observation satellites like LandSat and Terra keep an eye on rain and snow across the West. In fact, NASA currently has fourteen satellites studying the Earth's climate, and

several more missions are scheduled to be launched over the next few years. We've been working with Colorado's Water Conservation Districts to improve weekly, monthly, and seasonal water estimates for the state. Coloradans can manage scarce water supplies more efficiently by using data from NASA's Earth Observing System to create comprehensive real-time information and prediction tools.

I hope you'll remind people of the benefits of space exploration and of the jobs and technologies that return to Colorado as well as the Nation. As you do, remember that space exploration is important for creating jobs and driving innovation, but it's also about spirit – a spirit of discovery and exploration that drives all of us as Americans. That spirit drove explorers to venture out into the frontier, and pioneers to settle Colorado. That spirit will continue to drive us on to a new frontier – an endless frontier.

For the next several generations, that will mean the Moon, Mars, and other destinations in the Solar System. For generations much further into the future, perhaps there will be journeys beyond our Solar System – then we'll know we are truly a space-faring civilization.

It's exciting for all of us to be a part of the beginning of this journey and NASA appreciates your commitment, dedication, and passion for America's space program.

Thank you.